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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7982  
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RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS KINSHASA 000418

SIPDIS  
SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#) [BE](#)

SUBJECT: 21st Meeting of JMG Task Force, May 9, 2008

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Task Force members heard MONUC DDRRR director Philip Lancaster speak during most of the day's meeting, as the single expert on the agenda. Lancaster bracketed his presentation with cautions that logistical constraints and unrealistic time lines will limit the impact of the present DDRRR campaign for several months. Members praised an excerpt of one psyops film that MONUC-PIO made during visits to armed groups. Anticipating the JMG-EL meeting in Kigali during June, the TF members agreed to visit the event should the Special Envoys request it. Members also renewed prior recommendations to the Envoys, to assure completeness.  
END SUMMARY.

Bringing DDRRR Home  
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¶2. (SBU) Because not all members, notably the Rwandan delegation, had seen DDRRR operations as they play out inside the DRC, Lancaster emphasized the political dimension of the process: undermining the grip of FDLR's expatriate leadership and influencing the FDLR to leave the Congo. His strategy is the "hearts and minds" model, appealing to homesickness and the possibility of safe reunification with family in Rwanda. However Lancaster reminded the members that strong ideology cements the ex-FAR/Interhamwe from within, much as Stalinist commissars kept political order in military units during the Soviet era. He explained that a special propaganda branch and communication cell operating from Europe maintain tight contact with FDLR units in DRC.

¶3. (SBU) For Lancaster, sensitization is a marketing campaign designed to make repatriation more attractive for ex-FAR/Interhamwe than blind adherence to dictates from distant leaders. He showed sequences of a sensitization film that demonstrates the process and different levels of understanding and acceptance of it by FDLR combatants. Most promising of the new tools is a "call home" facility that DDRRR arranges from FDLR areas, offering telephone calls to or from families in Rwanda who assure their lost brothers and spouses that it is safe to return. The Rwandan delegation was clearly impressed by the DDRRR product and offered to facilitate more contacts with counterparts in Rwanda if asked.

Closing a Gap with Special Envoys  
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¶4. (SBU) The Task Force agreed to notify the Special Envoys that it is willing to pay a visit to the upcoming JMG-EL meeting in Kigali, in an effort to create a closer link between the two groups. Also, members decided to restate all recommendations made to the Special Envoys, including:

-- Recommendation that the Special Envoys ask GoDRC to create a timetable and work plan for future sensitization purposes.

-- Recommendation that the Special Envoys ask GoRwa to facilitate access of MONUC to Rwandan TV for sensitization purposes.

-- Recommendation that the Special Envoys ask GoRwa and GoDRC to cooperate on media projects and be jointly represented in host countries of FDLR leaders.

-- Recommendation that the Special Envoys ask International Community to commonly target the political leadership in Europe and North America - including judicial prosecution - as to minimize their influence on FDLR elements in Eastern DRC.

-- Recommendation that the Special Envoys ask MONUC to conduct research on political leaders of FDLR to build cases against them that warrant judicial prosecution.

15. (SBU) COMMENT: Lancaster's frank message that the international community is not moving fast enough or with sufficient coordination to get the most out of a promising DDRRR program surprised his audience, but neither the DRC nor Rwanda delegation used the TF meeting as a forum for suggesting change. The most promising tools are in the psychological operations realm, and the DDRRR Director is placing much of his hopes for influencing his very hard targets on the prompt arrival of more specialists in that field. END COMMENT.

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